Afghanistan Women Council's Message for International Women's Day 8 March,

International Solidarity Day

8 March 2004

Afghanistan Women Council congratulating International Women's Day, a Day of Solidarity, among all women internationally. We would like to wish all women good health and success in their struggle for their rights.

Dear sisters;

As it is clear, 8 of March is a day that world's women leading by Tila Zatgin raised the flag of women struggle for their rights, freedom, and democracy and got ready for achievement of high aim and objective for any kind of victim.

The injustice political administration due their anti humanitarian policies in the history ignored the rights of women who are half of the world's population and their legal rights of independence has been pushed and deprived via force. However, brave women continued their struggles for their rights by a strong commitment. Due to their continuous straggle, they came together, made their appeals and announcement by issuance of declaration for acceptance of this day as an International Women Day. Women from around the world came together in this day March 19, 1911 in Germany, Austria, Denmark and some other European countries and decided 8 March as an International Women's Day, a day to observe solidarity, unity, independence, democracy, restoration of their rights and achievement of their aims and objectives. German women chose this date because, on that date in 1848, the Prussian king, faced with an armed uprising, had promised many reforms, including an unfulfilled one of votes for women. Since then, this day was considered for celebrating International Women's Day.

Yes, when we are talking about two different genders, women and men, two different pictures appear in front of our eyes, but when we talk about human-being in a society we talk about all people in a society. Women and men are two main parts of any family in the society, and ach one has their important role to play. No society would have been completed without presence of gender, women and men. Therefore, women and men are equally two important element of a society.

Since the beginning of human's life, women and men life together and have had important role in establishing a society with law. **Women passed various parts of the history and tried harder than men to preserve the civilizations**. Women acted as a peacekeeper in the history and demonstrated to be kinder than men. In the meantime, women went through a very hard time and became victims of different violence. Since the beginning of human's life women handled proper management and

beauty of social life in the community, **put strong and stable steps and even was the factor of social life with enough strength, which is given to her by Holy God.**

Through out the human history women have played important role being as a mother. Women give birth to men and look after them from the time of birth and education and throughout their life. When you look at a family structure, women always are present to be the main figure in the family, responsible for children's behavior, education, manage the house, do the physical work and go through lots of difficulties to make sure that everything is looked after. More importantly, women remain good advisor to their families.

Women's role and effectiveness in each and every set of human's life is obvious, like sunshine. In all steps of civilization, science and technology, women have had a significant role to play.

Women's role is unforgettable. Women are the one who spent miles with men in hunger even they were pregnant and fights with occupiers and that is going on until now that she is beside men for all inventions of automatic machines and travel with them from the space to the underground. Whatever development and invention in today world from earth to the moon, is all great contribution of women.

Women are the one who give birth to scientists, philosophers, politicians, champions, and inventors. No body can say that Thomas Edison had no mother and grew up without help of his mother. It was his mother who looked after and educated him for all of his scientific and cultural work and made him Edison. It goes without saying that women are the educator of human being, ad founder and development.

Sadly enough, women's achievement has not been fully recognized yet though God has said to respect women. Human-being is created by God, and this does not mean only men, it includes everyone regardless of their gender. Holy God and Profit Mohammed (PBH) said that your best is the one who is following God's order, whether women or men. Our holy religion Islam also recognizes women as a very special individual.

Islam emphasizes on education for both women and men. Profit Mohammed (PBH) was the one who motivated everyone to support women and said that the best of your children are girls, and he stopped those who put their girls alive in grave.

Profit Mohammed (PBH) also said "if someone brings gift home, the gift should be presented to women first. Islam said the best mothers are those who educate the best children." Women should be respected as God orders and gives them a special place. "Heaven is under feet of mothers, means women should be respected." God says. If someone not respecting women they will not be the wise people. If we keep the women uneducated, the whole society remains uneducated. If we give less respect to women, we give less respect to ourselves. If we cannot believe the power and ability of women it means we ignore significant developments in science and technology in the world where women are involved directly and indirectly.

Women not only has crucial role in construction and education of family and society, but they also play role in peace building and security. Women like peace, and always maintain peaceful environment.

It is pity that Afghan women have been deprived from their fundamental human rights over the years. In the past two decades women were victim of force marriages, rape and used for payment for the men's crime. The Afghan women's life was like the salves or animal. Afghan women have been used as a political tool. Afghan women have been used and abused for variety of reasons. It has been mainly due to poor political will and leadership. For almost two decades, no attention has been paid towards women's rights and their full participation at any level.

Thousands of brave Afghan women were killed, injured and disabled during Russian invasion, and civil war in the country. More than two million Afghan women lost their husbands and became widows. In addition, millions of Afghan women became refugee in the neighboring countries Pakistan and Iran and other countries around the world. Moreover, the Afghan women lost whatever they owned, they had no shelter, adequate food, and their children who are the future of Afghanistan has no access to adequate education and health facilities. Most women and their children are begging for their livelihood. This was not a common practice in Afghan history to beg in the street especially our brave Afghan women who have been forced to come out the street and beg in order to feed their children.

Afghanistan Women Council (AWC) has fought against any kind of injustice in the past several years. Since the establishment in 1986, AWC kept struggling to regain women's rights, the basic human rights and respect in their communities and society. AWC has always used the opportunity of national and international days to appeal and raise the concern of women. Declarations have been announced and the voice of Afghan women has been reached to the deaf ears of the international community, human rights defender organizations and Amnesty International around world. The high ranking authorities of Afghan government have been informed on the injustice against Afghan women. AWC suggested solutions in order to overcome the problem of Afghan women.

When the Interim Government was made in Afghanistan, Afghan women were very optimistic about it and they hoped that the dark days would be vanished soon. But unfortunately, the violence against women persisted, including beatings, rapes, forced marriage and kidnapping. Women still fear of insecurity in the country, and can not walk freely outside Kabul city.

In order to restore Human Rights and Women Rights in the country more hard work and proper planning are required. The Ministry of Women Affairs existence is not very much useful in addressing women's issues and concerns.

In the meantime, many organizations established and benefited by using women's name, but nothing has been done in terms of helping women.

New constitution has been developed but has to be implemented accordingly. Afghan women need democratic environment, freedom of speech, media and full social, economical and political participation. AWC closely monitoring the current situation in Afghanistan, and urges the current government to include women emancipation in their agenda.

Due the critical current situation of women in the country AWC feel obligated to draw attention of the international community, high ranking authority of the interim Government of Afghanistan, Amnesty International and all those directly involved and responsible of the situation in Afghanistan to pay their attention to the following points to make the life of women better and get them out of such freezing situation:

- The Interim Government of Afghanistan should take accountable steps for the women life in the country and make proper plan for implementation of the new developed constitution in the country.
- The Interim Government of Afghanistan should make a country wide plan to improve adult literacy and political awareness should be given to women and men so they can be able to participate in selection of their new leadership for the country.
- The Interim Government of Afghanistan should make plans for developing economical, social, health, education, income generation and media awareness projects in the country especially for women to take them out of the current situation.
- The Interim Government of Afghanistan should provide job opportunities for women and encourage them to participate in rebuilding their country. Women's participation is very crucial in reconstruction of Afghanistan at all level.
- The Interim Government should fulfill their promises made in the Bonn Agreement which includes building a national army, police and disarm the warlords.
- AWC continues its struggle to make sure that the new constitution will be implemented so the people of Afghanistan will be able to nominate their new leadership and make their cabinet of the professional Afghans.
- Afghan women still feel insecure in the country, and AWC urges the United Nations and International community for expansion of International Security Forces for Afghanistan beyond Kabul city.

Long life human rights and women rights defenders.

Long life Afghanistan and women around the world.

Peace upon those lost their life for women rights.
End

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For more information about AWC please see the following AWC websites:
www.afghanwomenssupport.org
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March 8th the international women day
Women's Solidarity Day

3 March 2004

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Today is the day in which a number of patriotic, committed and wise women came together and convinced the world to accept the 8 March as a day for solidarity of women. It is a long time that this day is celebrating in the world as well as Afghanistan as an international women day on an official term but there is no knowledge to women about that and no men understand what it means by solidarity. We will not blame various administrations in the country, neighbors and super powers that who play what role in which field for what reasons. But as a human and women rights defender organization it was our responsibility and it is our responsibility to inform our people specially women to open their deaf ears and weak up to follow the convey of development from which we are already very behind.

On this respectful day once again our organization appeal to the Afghans (men and women), the Interim government, International community and those making decisions for the Interim government of Afghanistan that the Afghan Women do not need any more only in words but they need every thing in practice. A lot of promises have been made for Afghanistan but nothing is visible, why? we want to know the reasons. Regarding women, their women rights, their social rights as a member of the society, their respect in the family, community and in the whole society, their financial support for their sustainable life, no one has a proper plan. Women are under threat to death because of the non-availability of medical clinics, non-availability of proper birth attendance in the country most of mothers lose their life at the time of delivery of their loved child. The figures show that unfortunately Afghanistan is coming in the top of high mortality rate of mothers on birth in the world.

Afghan girls are hijacking and taking out of the country to the market for sale. Prostitution is going on in a very high speed in the county; our culture is going to be destroyed. We have lost our values why? Who is responsible for all these? Definitely Afghans first but who is paving the road for all these possibilities? There is no country in the world to watch more than three hundred TV channels for free which will have ten percent of the channels only for sex. If there was no hand behind, it would not be that easily available to every one. Afghanistan became training center for terrorism and center for drug, why? Who did it? These are all the questions that every Afghan knows but they are very tired because they spent a war of two decades. They need a kind hand of real human to take them out of such a complication.

We want to drew the attention of the Afghan women, Interim government, International community, Amnesty international and all those involved in the system development and management of Afghanistan to the following points:

1. Afghan women should respect their values according to Islam and their culture and tradition to gain their respect by rehabilitating its value in the society.
2. The Interim Government of Afghanistan should find job opportunities to women and provide them with the sustainable livelihood.
3. The International community, Amnesty International and other involved parties should monitor the implementation of the Bone conference and start implementation of the new Afghan developed constitution.

Thanks,